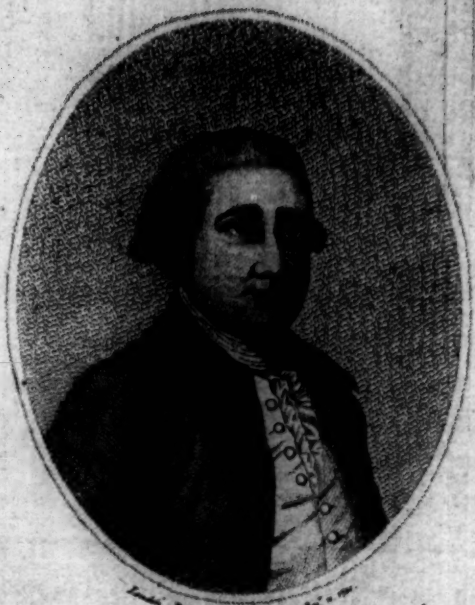


The SPEECH of the Hon. At a general Meeting of the Electors WESTMINSTER - HALL, on MONDAY the Purpose of considering of such in the present critical and alarming



CUP 21.939/14

CHARLES JAMES FOX,
of WESTMINSTER, held in
the 10th of DECEMBER, 1781, for
Measures as may be thought advisable
Situation of the Kingdom.

A MOST numerous body, not less than nine thousand, of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and others, Electors of Westminster, assembled in their magnificent Hall, in obedience to the summons of their great and constitutional Representative, "to consider of such measures as might be thought advisable, in the present critical and alarming situation of the kingdom." Among the number of high and respectable persons who were present, were The Earl of Surry, Earl of Derby, Earl of Northampton, Earl Spencer, Lord Viscount Althorpe, Lord George Cavendish, Lord John Cavendish, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord Edward Bentinck, Sir William Wake, Sir Joseph Mawbey, Sir Robert Smyth, Sir Thomas Frankland, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Sir Watkin Lewis, Sir Richard Hotham, General Burgoyne, General Honeywood, Hon. Mr. Wyndham, Hon. John Townshend, Hon. Col. Fitzpatrick, Doctor Jebb, Doctor Brocklesby, Mr. Burke, Mr. Byng, Mr. Wilkes, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. William Beckford, Mr. Richard Beckford, Mr. Thomas Scott, Mr. Brand Hollis, Rev. Mr. O'Beirne, Rev. Mr. Bromley, Mr. Colquhoun, Col. Byron, Mr. Churchill, Mr. H. Hoare, Mr. Pratt, Captain Vincent, Mr. Polhill, Mr. Smith, &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Harry House moved, that Mr. Fox be requested to take the chair, which was universally agreed to; in consequence of which

Mr. Fox then addressed himself to the Electors. He began by observing, that it would be very unnecessary to remind them, that it was the undoubted right and privilege of the People to assemble together, in order to take into consideration the situation of public affairs, and to address the Throne thereon. This, he said, had been their right time immemorial, though it had of late grown out of use, except upon very extraordinary emergencies. The present occasion of their meeting together, he trusted, would be deemed a sufficient ground for their appearance. Every one must be sensible of the present alarming crisis of public affairs. Not that he had presumed to call them together upon his own opinion. He had thought it proper to consult their Committee, which had been appointed last year, and they had held it fit that the Electors of Westminster should be summoned together, for the purpose of co-operating with the Electors of Great Britain in general, upon addressing the Throne on the present alarming crisis of public affairs.

They all knew, he said, what had been the consequence of the American war: they all knew that another entire army, consisting of 7,000 men under the command of Lord Cornwallis, had been lost in the prosecution of the war. Nay, to so wretched a state were the King's forces in America at length reduced, that they had been obliged to give up those very persons they had invited to their standard, by way of securing them against the people of America. These, he said, were the deluded people the Ministry so much talked about; for they had been taught to believe, that by coming to the King's standard, they would have their persons and properties secured, whereas by the tenth article of the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis, they were to be given up by the King's Commander to the mercy of their enemies.

Upon the capture of Lord Cornwallis, all men, he said, had but one opinion of the American war. They thought, and not without reason, that the present session of Parliament would have commenced with the deepest contrition on the part of Ministry, for the war they had waged and carried on, and every one expected, they would have humbled themselves before the representatives of the people, and have recommended a total change of measures. Instead of this, to the utter astonishment of all mankind, they had come to the House, persisting in their errors, and had caused the Sovereign, not only to approve of the war, but to signify that it should in future be persevered in with more vigour than usual. Thus, the people, he said, were plainly told from the Throne, that they should be made to support the war, in proportion to its want of success, and that its misfortunes should only serve to encrease, and add to the burthens already laid upon them.

It was the duty of the Public, he said, that they should provide the means of enabling the Sovereign to carry on the war, and it was the business of the representative in Parliament to take care that the people's money should be properly and honestly expended. Knowing this to be the duty of the representatives, he had refused to grant

destruction, that they had been called together, for he never supposed, that when once the sentiments of the people were made known to the Sovereign against the continuation of the American war, that the Sovereign would not attend to their petitions, and put an end to it. It was with this view that a petition to that purpose would be moved for; but in the process of the business, he intreated the electors, that their conduct might be peaceable and orderly, and entirely free from that riot and tumult which had thrown so great and general a discredit on the late meetings of the people, on another occasion.

Dr. Jebb came forward and said, Your worthy Representative has unfolded the occasion of this meeting, and with that constitutional propriety, which has always marked his character, has expressed his desire of conferring with and consulting his very respectable constituents on this awful situation of public affairs. He has given official information of the purpose of Government, and of the disposition of the Parliament to comply with the requisition of the crown. I observe with pleasure, says he, that Mr. Fox has proceeded according to the principles of the Constitution, and the practice of the purest times.

It was formerly the laudable custom, when the King proposed to his Parliament matters of high importance, for the representatives of the people to suspend their assent to the royal requisition, until by conference with their constituents they had learned that the measures proposed accorded with the sentiments of the persons from whom they had received their trust. Mr. Fox has revived this practice; and surely the Annals of our History have never afforded a more awful occasion than the present, when the very existence of the country is at stake.

It would be an insult to your understanding to enter into the evils derived to this country from the present unnatural and unfortunate war. It is the fruitful source of innumerable calamities. No situation so elevated, none so humble, which have not reason to lament its effects. With respect to its commencement, it was unfounded in principle, originating from an attempt to tax those who, being unrepresented, were not the proper objects of taxation by the Parliament of this country: that its progress was marked with injuries the most shocking to a free people; their forms of government were subverted, and they were conducted with every species of inhumanity and outrage; that its object was not merely to exact a revenue, but by the establishment of an army of placemen, to promote still farther the practice of corruption; and by applying a fund for seducing the members of your Parliament from their duty, to establish arbitrary power in this hitherto free and happy land. That such were the intentions of the enemies of freedom, that that Providence, said Dr. Jebb, with evident exultation, has defeated their attempt, and the event hath been, that America is now FREE and INDEPENDENT.

The evils attending the prosecution of this war, can with difficulty be conceived; but from the past misfortunes we may, however, draw some preface of what are to come, unless your virtue and spirit shall prevail. The advantages of an immediate reconciliation are as important, as the miseries are certain, should they continue the contest. Commerce will revive, ancient habits will return, and if you withdraw your fleets and armies, and no longer inflame the minds of the people on the other side of the Atlantic, Englishmen and Americans, though long estranged from each other, by the arts of evil men, will, like brethren, rush into each other's arms.

Petition and remonstrance seems the wisest mode of proceeding. Supposing you with the termination of this contest; it informs the King of the opinion of his subjects; and whatever may be the peculiar character of your chief Magistrate, I will venture to say, he will not, he cannot resist the unanimous wish of the English people.

With respect to the conduct of the present Ministers, Dr. Jebb maintained, that their misdeeds exceeded all powers of numbers; but that the petition he wished to propose, requested their removal, on the ground that America would not trust them; and that every power in Europe, not engaged in the contest, despised them, and therefore that peace was impracticable while they directed the Councils of this country. That he wished to comprehend the secret as well as open adviser of the measures in question; and thought it was right to demand their dismissal, as an evi-

In speaking of the first, therefore, he would only advert to the principal and the leading features; and in speaking of the last, of his Majesty's ministers, he would only advert to their general conduct, their system, and their character. With respect to the American war then, he was warranted in pronouncing, that it had originated in delusion; it had been conducted, and was continued, in delusion. There were many virtuous and worthy men, who in the beginning were brought to agree to the war with the Colonies; he did not condemn them for their conduct, though he had always differed with them, and had done his utmost to persuade them of their error. These were country gentlemen, who thought that the successes of the last war, though they were great and brilliant, had been rather expensive, and when the minister promised them that we should draw a revenue from America to pay a part of these expenses, and to alleviate the burthens of this country, they were deluded into an acquiescence in the coercive measures against America. The war therefore was begun for the purpose of alleviating the burthens of this country. Gentlemen, says Mr. Fox to his constituents, are you eased, are you lightened? Have you felt the benefit of the American war in the decrease of taxes, in the extension of your commerce, in the thriving state and opulence of your city? No. Your burthens have been doubled, and his Majesty's ministers have broken their promises with you. They have not drawn a revenue from America to alleviate the weight of your taxes; but instead of this they have spent more in dismembering the empire, than the great and good conductors of the last war did in procuring the addition of Canada, and of all the advantages and glory which were gained to Great Britain at that time. So far then the American war had fallen short of the purpose for which it was commenced. But it was said, that if we should suffer America to become independent, and to establish a separate Republic, they would attack and conquer our West India islands. We must therefore go to war with America, for the purpose of saving our West India islands. Had we produced the desired effect? We had lost Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Tobago. This was the manner in which we had saved the West Indies by prosecuting the American war. It was said again, that if we did not reduce the Americans to dependence, that they would form an alliance with France, and France and America united would be too powerful for this country. This was said; and what was the consequence? We had pursued the war, and the Americans and French had entered into an alliance—their armies were joined, and their armies thus joined had conquered and reduced one of the armies of Great Britain. This then was the consequence of the original delusion. They had promised us a revenue from America, and they had doubled our burthens. They had promised to protect our islands in the West Indies, and they had lost Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Tobago. They had promised to restore America to its old connection and friendship with this country, and America had entered into an alliance with France. He was warranted in saying therefore that the American war had originated in delusion, and had been conducted and continued by the same means. With respect to his Majesty's ministers he would only say, as he had all along, that they had held out those promises, knowing them to be false and delusive; knowing that they had it not in their power to fulfil them. He did not know that they were paid by France, he did not suspect it. France had refined upon its former policy. We all know, Gentlemen, says he, that in the reign of Lewis XIV. our King and ministry were pensioned by France; but now they have refined upon their former policy, and they have contrived, Gentlemen, to make you pay those ministers for doing their business.

What is the interest, and what the policy of France at all times? To weaken this country. What then must have been the happiness of France, when they saw Englishmen fight with Englishmen in America, and fight with Dutchmen in Europe? This was brought about by his Majesty's ministers. Every blow that was struck by Britain in this war; every blow directed against our fellow-subjects in America, or against our allies and old friends the Dutch, in Europe, was struck for the aggrandizement and the advantage of France. These ministers had declared, that it was a war of ambition on the part of France; and in truth it was so, for it must always be the policy of France to weaken

glorious war, and observe the circumstances and the conduct of the present.

There were none present who did not remember the late Earl of Chatham: they knew what his war was, and the events of it. They also knew the war of the present Ministers, and its consequences. They had cost the nation a great deal more to undo it, than the illustrious Ministry under the Earl of Chatham had expended, in advancing it to the highest state of prosperity.

Do you think these Ministers are equal in abilities to the great and vigorous men who conducted the last war, and who brought so great an accession of territory to their country? There was one thing for which, as he had said, they blamed those Ministers, that they had gone to immense expenses, and that though their conquests were undoubtedly great and splendid, their conquests were bought too dear. If the present set of men resembled them in any thing, it was in having contrived to make the country pay more money for dismembering the British Empire, and losing one half of it, than the others had spent in bringing it to so vast an accession, and in raising it to so wonderful a height of splendor and fame.

To talk of equality of mind, was impotence in the extreme; it was what no man of common sense would believe. But it was what these Ministers had held out to delude the people, and to make them fancy that they had nothing to expect from a change of men, or a change of measures. With regard to the manner in which they had conducted this war, he had purposely avoided going into its detail, for the reason which he had mentioned, that of its being totally unnecessary. There was only one thing which he must say, that when they saw, in the midst of such a war, so many able, distinguished and brave Generals and Admirals, who had been engaged in it, walking the streets of the metropolis, or heard of them living at their houses in the country, they must believe, that there was something at the bottom of the system, something rotten, poisonous, or defective, which drove these great men from the service, and made it unsafe for them to venture to spill their blood for their country. They were men as high in renown, as distinguished in their abilities, as eminent, and as beloved in the service as any officers that ever existed; their zeal was equal to their talents; and such men surely could not have been driven from their posts, unless some black, secret canker was at the heart of the system.

He called to the recollection of the meeting the inferiority of our navy, considered with that of the enemy's. But what was truly alarming, the Ministry had at length declared officially, in the House of Lords and Commons, that the navy of Great Britain *was inferior, ever had been inferior, and would ever remain inferior to the enemy's*. If this language had been held by any one in Opposition, he would have been pronounced a disaffected person, and would have been arraigned of raising a dependency in the public. The Ministry, however, now officially declared it: and it might be so under their management; but Mr. Fox would venture to say, that with the management of the navy in other hands, Great Britain would not show an inferior fleet, nor leave the sovereignty of the sea at least undisputed. He much enlarged on this point, and shewed how necessary a superior navy was to the honour, prosperity, and interest of the British empire.

This was all he had to say with respect to the American war, or to his Majesty's Ministers. As to the mode of redress proper to be pursued in these circumstances, it was his sincere opinion, that the Address, Remonstrance and Petition moved for and read by Dr. Jebb, was the wisest and the best means that could be adopted. It was dutiful and submissive. It was an earnest appeal from the decision of Ministers to the wisdom and virtues of his Majesty. It spoke the sentiments of a free suffering people, and spoke in a language which a good and constitutional King would be happy to hear from a loyal and a free people. A Crown Lawyer had said upon a late occasion in that hall, speaking upon a petition, "That he had often heard of 'bumble petitioners, of earnest petitioners, of submissive petitioners, but he never wished to 'hear of firm petitioners.'" Notwithstanding, says Mr. Fox, what this great Crown Lawyer has said, I trust, that upon the present occasion we shall be firm petitioners. But I would not have any man believe, that in saying, I trust we shall be firm petitioners, that I mean by the word *firmness*, that

and of public peace. Let us petition with this sort of firmness, the true, and indeed the only demonstration which deserves the name of firmness; and I trust we shall gain our end. It has been said, Will his Majesty accept our humble Address? He could not believe it possible that his Majesty, a Prince of the House of Brunswick, descended from ancestors so firmly attached to the liberties of the human race, and who, on account of that attachment, had been called by the voice of the people of England to the throne of these kingdoms. It was impossible for him to believe, or to imagine, that such a Prince could refuse to admit the humble petitions of his subjects, dutifully assembled for the redress of grievances. It was impossible for him to entertain, even for a moment the suspicion, that his Majesty could disregard the voice of the people of England; that voice which had seated his family on the throne, and which was by the constitution, the original and the supreme Majesty of the land, from which all other authority was delegated, and for whose liberty, security, and happiness, all delegated authority, was held and exercised. He could not believe it possible that his Majesty could refuse their Address, or when he came to know, that their sentiments and advice, were the sentiments and the advice of his people at large, that he would refuse to comply therewith. The address prayed, that an end might be put to the American war, to the system and measures on which it was conducted, and that his Majesty's Ministers might be removed from his presence and councils. They did not desire this last part of their prayer from any other view than that mentioned by his truly worthy and constitutional friend, Dr. Jebb, that the Americans would never submit to enter into any treaty with men, of whom they had no opinion, and in whom they had no confidence. This was the reason for which they ought to pray and petition for the removal of those men, that they might, if possible, have yet an opportunity of conciliating the affections of America, and of bringing the Colonies back to the bosom and the friendship of Great Britain.

He had no more to say, but to acknowledge the many obligations which he was under to them for their kind confidence, and for the many singular favours with which they had loaded him. He was bound to them by every tie of gratitude and duty. He had constantly acted in Parliament as became the Representative of a free people; he had acted up to the general declared sense of that people. He held himself bound to obey their instructions. They had sent him to Parliament to guard their rights, to protect their liberty, and to do their business, not his own. He was happy therefore, upon occasions so very important, to meet them thus in a general assembly, to hear their sentiments, and to receive their orders. It was his sincere opinion, that the different counties and cities of England had it in their power to put an end to the American war, and to the infamous system under which we had suffered so much, by concurring in the loyal Address to the Throne which Dr. Jebb had moved, and of which he most heartily and entirely approved. He thought this, because, as he had said, he thought that his Majesty would not persevere in the war against the declared voice of the people of England. He therefore sincerely hoped that it would extend, and that their firm and loyal application to the Throne would be crowned with the happy consequences which it deserved.

The motion for agreeing to the Address which Dr. Jebb had moved, was now put and agreed to, by the unanimous voice of the numerous and respectable body, and with the most expressive marks of their heartfelt and warm approbation of it.

The petition received a number of signatures in the hall, and it was declared, that notice would be given of the places where copies of it would lie for the convenience of receiving the names of the electors in the different parts of the city. The thanks of the meeting were then moved and unanimously voted to Mr. Fox, for his manly and constitutional conduct as their Representative in Parliament, and to request him to continue his opposition to the American war. It was also moved and resolved to thank him for his conduct as Chairman of that meeting; and the resolutions were ordered to be printed in the public papers.

The business being thus over, the body separated, as they had assembled, with that order and peaceable deportment which good and respectable Citizens will always observe, called together by sufferings almost insupportable to human strength and

A MOST numerous body, not less than nine thousand, of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and others, Electors of Westminster, assembled in their magnificent Hall, in obedience to the summons of their great and constitutional Representative, "to consider of such measures as might be thought advisable, in the present critical and alarming situation of the kingdom." Among the number of high and respectable persons who were present, were The Earl of Surry, Earl of Derby, Earl of Northampton, Earl Spencer, Lord Viscount Althorpe, Lord George Cavendish, Lord John Cavendish, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord Edward Bentinck, Sir William Wake, Sir Joseph Mawbey, Sir Robert Smyth, Sir Thomas Frankland, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Sir Watkin Lewes, Sir Richard Hotham, General Burgoyne, General Honeywood, Hon. Mr. Wyndham, Hon. John Townshend, Hon. Col. Fitzpatrick, Doctor Jebb, Doctor Brocklesby, Mr. Burke, Mr. Byng, Mr. Wilkes, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. William Beckford, Mr. Richard Beckford, Mr. Thomas Scott, Mr. Brand Hollis, Rev. Mr. O'Beirne, Rev. Mr. Bromley, Mr. Colquhoun, Col. Byron, Mr. Churchill, Mr. H. Hoare, Mr. Pratt, Captain Vincent, Mr. Polhill, Mr. Smith, &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Harry Housé moved, that Mr. Fox be requested to take the chair, which was universally agreed to; in consequence of which

Mr. Fox then addressed himself to the Electors. He began by observing, that it would be very unnecessary to remind them, that it was the undoubted right and privilege of the People to assemble together, in order to take into consideration the situation of public affairs, and to address the Throne thereon. This, he said, had been their right time immemorial, though it had of late grown out of use, except upon very extraordinary emergencies. On the present occasion of their meeting together, he trusted, would be deemed a sufficient ground for their appearance. Every one must be sensible of the present alarming crisis of public affairs. Not that he had presumed to call them together upon his own opinion. He had thought it proper to consult their Committee, which had been appointed last year, and they had held it fit that the Electors of Westminster should be summoned together, for the purpose of co-operating with the Electors of Great Britain in general, upon addressing the Throne on the present alarming crisis of public affairs.

They all knew, he said, what had been the consequence of the American war: they all knew that another entire army, consisting of 7,000 men under the command of Lord Cornwallis, had been lost in the prosecution of the war. Nay, to so wretched a state were the King's forces in America at length reduced, that they had been obliged to give up those very persons they had invited to their standard, by way of securing them against the people of America. There, he said, were the deluded people the Ministry so much talked about; for they had been taught to believe, that by coming to the King's standard, they would have their persons and properties secured, whereas, by the tenth article of the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis, they were to be given up by the King's Commander to the mercy of their enemies.

Upon the capture of Lord Cornwallis, all men, he said, had but one opinion of the American war. They thought, and not without reason, that the present session of Parliament would have commenced with the deepest contrition on the part of Ministry, for the war they had waged and carried on, and every one expected, they would have humbled themselves before the representatives of the people, and have recommended a total change of measures. Instead of this, to the utter astonishment of all mankind, they had come to the House, persisting in their errors, and had caused the Sovereign, not only to approve of the war, but to signify that it should in future be persevered in with more vigour than usual. Thus, the people, he said, were plainly told from the Throne, that they should be made to support the war, in proportion to its want of success, and that its misfortunes should only serve to encrease, and add to the burthens already laid upon them.

It was the duty of the Public, he said, that they should provide the means of enabling the Sovereign to carry on the war, and it was the business of the representative in Parliament to take care that the people's money should be properly and honestly expended. Knowing this to be the duty of the representatives, he had refused to grant any further supplies, until some pledge should be given from the Ministry, that the American war should be discontinued, and a total change of measures resolved upon.

Mr. Fox touched upon the present situation of things, and drew a very melancholy, though too true a picture of them. Our commerce, he said, had been totally ruined, our resources exhausted, and the disgrace and ignominy of the British empire rendered complete and intire under the management of the present weak and wicked Administration. It was to collect the sense of the people on the present posture of affairs, in order that the same might be laid at the foot of the Throne, as a means of saving the British empire from total

destruction, that they had been called together, for he never supposed, that when once the sentiments of the people were made known to the Sovereign against the continuation of the American war, that the Sovereign would not attend to their petitions, and put an end to it. It was with this view that a petition to that purpose would be moved for; but in the process of the business, he intreated the electors, that their conduct might be peaceable and orderly, and entirely free from that riot and tumult which had thrown so great and general a discredit on the late meetings of the people, on another occasion.

Dr. Jebb came forward and said, Your worthy Representative has unfolded the occasion of this meeting, and with that constitutional propriety, which has always marked his character, has expressed his desire of conferring with and consulting his very respectable constituents on this awful situation of public affairs. He has given official information of the purpose of Government, and of the disposition of the Parliament to comply with the requisition of the crown. I observe with pleasure, says he, that Mr. Fox has proceeded according to the principles of the Constitution, and the practice of the purest times.

It was formerly the laudable custom, when the King proposed to his Parliament matters of high importance, for the representatives of the people to suspend their assent to the royal requisition, until by conference with their constituents they had learned that the measures proposed accorded with the sentiments of the persons from whom they had received their trust. Mr. Fox has revived this practice; and surely the Annals of our History have never afforded a more awful occasion than the present, when the very existence of the country is at stake.

It would be an insult to your understanding to enter into the evils derived to this country from the present unnatural and unfortunate war. It is the fruitful source of innumerable calamities. No situation so elevated, none so humble, which have not reason to lament its effects. With respect to its commencement, it was unfounded in principle, originating from an attempt to tax those who, being unrepresented, were not the proper objects of taxation by the Parliament of this country: that its progress was marked with injuries the most shocking to a free people; their forms of government were subverted, and they were conducted with every species of inhumanity and outrage; that its object was not merely to exact a revenue, but, by the establishment of an army of placemen, to promote still farther the practice of corruption; and by applying a fund for seducing the members of your Parliament from their duty, to establish arbitrary power in this hitherto free and happy land. That such were the intentions of the enemies of freedom, but that Providence, said Dr. Jebb, with evident exultation, has defeated their attempt, and the event hath been, that America is now FREE and INDEPENDENT.

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Petition and remonstrance seems the wisest mode of proceeding. Supposing you with the termination of this contest; it informs the King of the opinion of his subjects; and whatever may be the peculiar character of your chief Magistrate, I will venture to say, he will not, he cannot resist the unanimous wish of the English people.

With respect to the conduct of the present Ministers, Dr. Jebb maintained, that their misdeeds exceeded all powers of numbers; but that the petition he wished to propose, requested their removal, on the ground that America would not trust them; and that every power in Europe, not engaged in the contest, despised them, and therefore that peace was impracticable while they directed the Councils of this country. That he wished to comprehend the secret as well as open adviser of the measures in question; and thought it was right to demand their dismissal, as an evidence of the sincerity of our purpose, and a proof of our desire to restore the blessings of peace.

Dr. Jebb then proposed the presenting of the petition similar to that of London, which he read and moved.

Mr. Colquhoun seconded the motion, declaring he most warmly and sincerely believed this to be the most eligible method of putting an end to the American war, and to all our calamities.

Mr. Fox then came forward, and addressed his Constituents in a short but most animated speech. He said, to expatiate upon the conduct and misfortunes of the American war at this moment, he trusted would be needless; to expatiate on the errors of his Majesty's ministers would be endless.

In speaking of the first, therefore, he would only advert to the principal and the leading features; and in speaking of the last, of his Majesty's ministers, he would only advert to their general conduct, their system, and their character. With respect to the American war then, he was warranted in pronouncing, that it had originated in delusion; it had been conducted, and was continued, in delusion. There were many virtuous and worthy men, who in the beginning were brought to agree to the war with the Colonies; he did not condemn them for their conduct, though he had always differed with them, and had done his utmost to persuade them of their error. These were country gentlemen, who thought that the successes of the last war, though they were great and brilliant, had been rather expensive, and when the minister promised them that we should draw a revenue from America to pay a part of these expences, and to alleviate the burthens of this country, they were deluded into an acquiescence in the coercive measures against America. The war therefore was begun for the purpose of alleviating the burthens of this country. Gentlemen, says Mr. Fox to his constituents, are you eased, are you lightened? Have you felt the benefit of the American war in the decrease of taxes, in the extension of your commerce, in the thriving state and opulence of your city? No. Your burthens have been doubled, and his Majesty's ministers have broken their promises with you. They have not drawn a revenue from America to alleviate the weight of your taxes; but instead of this they have spent more in dismembering the empire, than the great and good conductors of the last war did in procuring the addition of Canada, and of all the advantages and glory which were gained to Great Britain at that time. So far then the American war had fallen short of the purpose for which it was commenced.

But it was said, that if we should suffer America to become independent, and to establish a separate Republic, they would attack and conquer our West India islands. We must therefore go to war with America, for the purpose of saving our West India islands. Had we produced the desired effect? We had lost Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Tobago. This was the manner in which we had saved the West Indies by prosecuting the American war. It was said again, that if we did not reduce the Americans to dependence, that they would form an alliance with France, and France and America united would be too powerful for this country. This was said; and what was the consequence? We had pursued the war, and the Americans and French had entered into an alliance—their armies were joined, and their armies thus joined had conquered and reduced one of the armies of Great Britain. This then was the consequence of the original delusion. They had promised us a revenue from America, and they had doubled our burthens. They had promised to protect our islands in the West Indies, and they had lost Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and Tobago. They had promised to restore America to its old connection and friendship with this country, and America had entered into an alliance with France. He was warranted in saying therefore that the American war had originated in delusion, and had been conducted and continued by the same means. With respect to his Majesty's ministers he would only say, as he had all along, that they had held out those promises, knowing them to be false and delusive; knowing that they had it not in their power to fulfil them. He did not know that they were paid by France, he did not suspect it. France had refined upon its former policy. We all know, Gentlemen, says he, that in the reign of Lewis XIV. our King and ministry were pensioned by France; but now they have refined upon their former policy, and they have contrived, Gentlemen, to make you pay those ministers for doing their business.

What is the interest, and what the policy of France at all times? To weaken this country. What then must have been the happiness of France, when they saw Englishmen fight with Englishmen in America, and fight with Dutchmen in Europe? This was brought about by his Majesty's ministers. Every blow that was struck by Britain in this war; every blow directed against our fellow-subjects in America, or against our allies and old friends the Dutch, in Europe, was struck for the aggrandizement and the advantage of France. These ministers had declared, that it was a war of ambition on the part of France; and in truth it was so, for it must always be the policy of France to weaken and reduce this country. To defeat the purposes of the House of Bourbon—the Catholic powers of Europe—what had been the plan and system of Ministers? They had separated and divided the two great Protestant powers of Europe, whose business and interest it always was, and must be, to resist and to check the ambition of France and Spain. Gentlemen, says he, the ministry have said that there is a natural equality among men. Not that they are equal in rights, in privileges, in liberty, for in these indeed they are equal; but that they are all equal in abilities, in knowledge, and in the talents of the mind. Will you agree to this assertion, Gentlemen? Call to recollection the circumstances and the conduct of the last memorable and

glorious war, and observe the circumstances and the conduct of the present.

There were none present who did not remember the late Earl of Chatham: they knew what his war was, and the events of it. They also knew the war of the present Ministers, and its consequences. They had cost the nation a great deal more to undo it, than the illustrious Ministry under the Earl of Chatham had expended, in advancing it to the highest state of prosperity.

Do you think these Ministers are equal in abilities to the great and vigorous men who conducted the last war, and who brought so great an accession of territory to their country? There was one thing for which, as he had said, they blamed those Ministers, that they had gone to immense expences, and that though their conquests were undoubtedly great and splendid, their conquests were bought too dear. If the present set of men resembled them in any thing, it was in having contrived to make the country pay more money for dismembering the British Empire, and losing one half of it, than the others had spent in bringing it to so vast an accession, and in raising it to so wonderful a height of splendor and fame.

To talk of equality of mind, was impotence in the extreme; it was what no man of common sense would believe. But it was what these Ministers had held out to delude the people, and to make them fancy that they had nothing to expect from a change of men, or a change of measures. With regard to the manner in which they had conducted this war, he had purposely avoided going into its detail, for the reason which he had mentioned, that of its being totally unnecessary. There was only one thing which he must say, that when they saw, in the midst of such a war, so many able, distinguished and brave Generals and Admirals, who had been engaged in it, walking the streets of the metropolis, or heard of them living at their houses in the country, they must believe, that there was something at the bottom of the system, something rotten, poisonous, or defective, which drove these great men from the service, and made it unsafe for them to venture to spill their blood for their country. They were men as high in renown, as distinguished in their abilities, as eminent, and as beloved in the service as any officers that ever existed; their zeal was equal to their talents; and such men surely could not have been driven from their posts, unless some black, secret canker was at the heart of the system.

He called to the recollection of the meeting the inferiority of our navy, considered with that of the enemy's. But what was truly alarming, the Ministry had at length declared officially, in the House of Lords and Commons, that the navy of Great Britain was inferior, ever had been inferior, and would ever remain inferior to the enemy's. If this language had been held by any one in Opposition, he would have been pronounced a disaffected person, and would have been arraigned of raising a dependency in the public. The Ministry, however, now officially declared it; and it might be so under their management; but Mr. Fox would venture to say, that with the management of the navy in other hands, Great Britain would not shew an inferior fleet, nor leave the sovereignty of the sea at least undisturbed. He much enlarged on this point, and shewed how necessary a superior navy was to the honour, prosperity, and interest of the British empire.

This was all he had to say with respect to the American war, or to his Majesty's Ministers. As to the mode of redress proper to be pursued in these circumstances, it was his sincere opinion, that the Address, Remonstrance and Petition moved for and read by Dr. Jebb, was the wisest and the best means that could be adopted. It was dutiful and submissive. It was an earnest appeal from the decision of Ministers, to the wisdom and virtues of his Majesty. It spoke the sentiments of a free suffering people, and spoke in a language which a good and constitutional King would be happy to hear from a loyal and a free people. A Crown Lawyer had said upon a late occasion in that hall, speaking upon a petition, "That he had often heard of 'humble petitioners, of earnest petitioners, of submissive petitioners, but he never wished to hear of firm petitioners.'" Notwithstanding, says Mr. Fox, what this great Crown Lawyer has said, I trust, that upon the present occasion we shall be firm petitioners. But I would not have any man believe, that in saying, I trust we shall be firm petitioners, that I mean by the word *firmness*, that we shall be violent in our resolutions, or outrageous in our conduct; that we shall insult Majesty with unbecoming mandates, trample on the laws, or promote public disorder. No, that is not the quality nor the consequence of *firmness*. Firmness implies, a steadiness of temper, a resolution, an evenness, and a gravity of mind, not to be provoked into hasty violence and outrage. Firmness is accompanied with moderation, it is strengthened by calmness, it is connected with order, decency, and justice. Let us then be firm petitioners, that is, let us be temperate, cool, dispassionate and composed. Let us express our loyalty to the King and his family, our reverence for the laws of the land, and our love of order, of good government,

and of public peace. Let us petition with this sort of firmness, the true, and indeed the only demonstration which deserves the name of firmness; and I trust we shall gain our end. It has been said, Will his Majesty accept our humble Address? He could not believe it possible that his Majesty, a Prince of the House of Brunswick, descended from ancestors so firmly attached to the liberties of the human race, and who, on account of that attachment, had been called by the voice of the people of England to the throne of these kingdoms. It was impossible for him to believe, or to imagine, that such a Prince could refuse to admit the humble petitions of his subjects, dutifully assembled for the redress of grievances. It was impossible for him to entertain, even for a moment the suspicion, that his Majesty could disregard the voice of the people of England; that voice which had seated his family on the throne, and which was by the constitution, the original and the supreme Majesty of the land, from which all other authority was delegated, and for whose liberty, security, and happiness, all delegated authority, was held and exercised. He could not believe it possible that his Majesty could refuse their Address, or when he came to know that their sentiments and advice, were the sentiments and the advice of his people at large, that he would refuse to comply therewith. The address prayed, that an end might be put to the American war, to the system and measures on which it was conducted, and that his Majesty's Ministers might be removed from his presence and council. They did not desire this last part of their prayer from any other view than that mentioned by his truly worthy and constitutional friend, Dr. Jebb, that the Americans would never submit to enter into any treaty with men, of whom they had no opinion, and in whom they had no confidence. This was the reason for which they ought to pray and petition for the removal of those men, that they might, if possible, have yet an opportunity of conciliating the affections of America, and of bringing the Colonies back to the bosom and the friendship of Great Britain.

He had no more to say, but to acknowledge the many obligations which he was under to them for their kind confidence, and for the many singular favours with which they had loaded him. He was bound to them by every tie of gratitude and duty. He had constantly acted in Parliament as became the Representative of a free people; he had acted up to the general declared sense of that people. He held himself bound to obey their instructions. They had sent him to Parliament to guard their rights, to protect their liberty, and to do their business, not his own. He was happy therefore, upon occasions so very important, to meet them thus in a general assembly, to hear their sentiments, and to receive their orders. It was his sincere opinion, that the different counties and cities of England had it in their power to put an end to the American war, and to the infamous system under which we had suffered so much, by concurring in the loyal Address to the Throne which Dr. Jebb had moved, and of which he most heartily and entirely approved. He thought this, because, as he had said, he thought that his Majesty would not persevere in the war against the declared voice of the people of England. He therefore sincerely hoped that it would extend, and that their firm and loyal application to the Throne would be crowned with the happy consequences which it deserved.

The motion for agreeing to the Address which Dr. Jebb had moved, was now put and agreed to, by the unanimous voice of the numerous and respectable body, and with the most expressive marks of their heartfelt and warm approbation of it.

The petition received a number of signatures in the hall, and it was declared, that notice would be given of the places where copies of it would lie for the convenience of receiving the names of the electors in the different parts of the city. The thanks of the meeting were then moved and unanimously voted to Mr. Fox, for his manly and constitutional conduct as their Representative in Parliament, and to request him to continue his opposition to the American war. It was also moved and resolved to thank him for his conduct as Chairman of that meeting; and the resolutions were ordered to be printed in the public papers.

The business being thus over, the body separated, as they had assembled, with that order and peaceable deportment which good and respectable Citizens will always observe, called together by sufferings almost insupportable by human strength or fortitude. They agreed to approach the throne with a grave and solemn appeal, declaring their general sense of the common calamity. They were in earnest in what they did, and, while their petition was conveyed in language open and explicit, they threw in their own demeanor a firm and serious conviction of the necessity of the redress for which they applied. That their virtuous efforts for our deliverance may be crowned with success! must be the prayer of every good and honest man.

